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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 TOKYO 002164

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SUBJECT: MOFA DEPUTIES OFFER VIEWS ON ASIA

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Classified By: Ambassador John V. Roos for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: MOFA Asian and Oceanian Affairs deputy directors-general (DDG) discussed a wide range of Asia-related policy issues during separate meetings with Political Minister-Counselor September 9-10. The PDAS/DAS equivalents noted that the Foreign Ministry is providing policy briefs to Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President and Prime Minister (PM) Yukio Hatoyama and Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada. U.S. bases in Okinawa, Japanese Self-Defense Forces (SDF) refueling operations in the Indian Ocean, and China's ascendancy are some of the critical issues facing the new government, they assessed. MOFA, however, is still taking a general "wait-and-see" approach to the DPJ, believing that the party's policy views and priorities remain unclear. The new Japanese government will probably assume a firmer position on Burma than the previous administration, the DDGs noted. On Pakistan, the situation in the southwest Asian country is becoming more complicated and fragile as concerned parties prepare for the upcoming Friends of Pakistan Summit in New York in late September. A brief explanation of Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau responsibilities and DDG bios follow the main text. End Summary.

¶2. (C) MOFA Asian and Oceanian Affairs Deputy Directors-General Kimihiro Ishikane, Mitsuro Kitano, and Masahiro Kohara discussed a wide range of Asia-related policy issues, including China, North Korea, Burma, India-Pakistan, and ASEAN during separate meetings with Political Minister-Counselor September 9-10. They universally agreed that the historic political change in Japan required even greater U.S.-Japanese coordination and cooperation on key issues impacting the Asia-Pacific region and the world at large.

MOFA Prepping New Tokyo Administration

¶3. (C) The DDGs mentioned separately that MOFA officials are providing policy briefs to DPJ President and Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama and Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada. U.S. bases in Okinawa, SDF refueling operations in the Indian Ocean, and China's ascendancy are some of the critical

issues facing the new government, they assessed. The Hatoyama Administration must take the Okinawa situation, in particular, "very seriously," Kitano said. Politically, the DPJ must also still deal with an opposition Liberal Democratic Party, Ishikane noted. MOFA officials are preparing for a busy Diet session and will need to respond diligently to interpellations, Kohara stressed.

¶4. (C) MOFA, however, is still taking a general "wait-and-see" approach to the DPJ, believing that the party's policy views and priorities remain unclear, Ishikane said. He stated that most observers still do not have a clear idea about the mandate, goals, and objectives of the proposed National Strategy Bureau, for example. The new bureau will likely handle security as well as internal, budgetary issues, like a "combined NSC and NEC", explained Ishikane.

¶5. (C) Generally speaking, Japanese people understand that the U.S.-Japan Alliance is "very important" and is the basis of Japan's foreign policy, Kohara said. Hatoyama is keenly aware of this fact. The presumptive PM sees bilateral ties with the United States and relations with Asian neighbors as "two sides of the same coin;" Washington and Tokyo are in a position to cooperate and coordinate on Asia policy, Kohara expounded. Personally, Kohara said that he is "not worried" and is "confident" that the DPJ will take a practical, realistic approach to U.S. policy issues. Ishikane separately added that Hatoyama is expressing "attachment to Asia," but that he will face foreign policy matters "squarely."

Rise of China a Chief Concern

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¶6. (C) DDG Kohara, a China hand who speaks fluent Mandarin, mentioned that the economic and military "rise" of China would present some of the greatest challenges for the DPJ-led government. He highlighted the importance of U.S. engagement in Asia, in part, as a hedge against growing Chinese regional influence. Kohara said that many China observers and personal friends of Chinese ancestry see the country as a "rising star." However, he downplayed projections in some media circles of a U.S.-China "G-2"-type framework developing in the near future due to potentially destabilizing internal Chinese societal, economic, and environmental factors. There is still "a sense of crisis" in China, Kohara said.

¶7. (C) Kohara underscored the need to emphasize policy measures that "hedge" against China. China's political presence is expanding "in all corners of the world," including, for example, the Pacific Islands, where community building, democratization, and political stability are oftentimes rare. Japan, for its part, is conducting consultations with China in multiple areas but with little tangible results. Kohara highlighted the joint agreement on resource exploration in the East China Sea concluded in June 2008 but lamented the ongoing delay in formal negotiations on joint development of selected sites. He also listed the lack of progress in resolving cases involving tainted Chinese food products imported to Japan.

¶8. (C) Although leery about Chinese intentions and power trajectory, Kohara noted the positive steps Beijing is taking to strengthen overall ties and, specifically, to reach out to the new Japanese administration. North Korea is a source of concern for both sides and represents an area that needs continued cooperation among parties in the region, he said. Kohara cited Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Wu Dawei's September 8 meetings with prospective members of Japan's new coalition government and reported that Wu stressed the importance of resolving North Korean nuclear issues through the Six-Party process and, specifically, the need to enforce

UNSC resolution 1874 against the North. Wu also reportedly urged his Japanese interlocutors to continue strengthening bilateral ties under a new Japanese Cabinet. Kohara also confirmed press reports indicating that Beijing wants to invite Hatoyama to China at an early date, preferably during the next Japan-China-South Korea Summit, slated for later this year, perhaps in early October in Tianjin.

Anticipating Tougher Burma Policy

¶9. (C) The new Japanese government will probably assume a firmer position on Burma than the previous administration, Ishikane asserted. His observation mirrors those of other MOFA Burma policy managers who say that the large number of relatively junior DPJ members express less sympathy toward Burma than the older generation of Japanese lawmakers. Ishikane admitted that Tokyo's longstanding pressure and engagement strategy on Burma has produced "no results," even with the "tiny" leverage that Japan enjoys. He also cautioned against letting India and China "do what they wish" in the neighboring country and stressed the importance of close consultations between the United States and Japan.

Pakistan Key Challenge

¶10. (C) Stakes are high in Pakistan as well, Kitano assessed. The situation there is becoming more complicated and fragile as concerned parties prepare for the upcoming Friends of Pakistan Summit in New York in late September. Kitano mentioned that a Chinese delegation attended the April 2009 Pakistan Donor's Conference in Tokyo but did not offer monetary assistance because Beijing, in general, prefers to deal with countries within a bilateral framework, rather than through multilateral means. China is a "big" bilateral supporter of Pakistan and maintains strong links but

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generally avoids disclosing its intentions in the country to third parties, Kitano noted.

Division of Labor Among Bureau Deputies

¶11. (C) The Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau is generally considered one of MOFA's most prestigious bureaus with several high-profile issues under its purview. Charged with formulating and coordinating policies concerning Asia, the Bureau comprises seven divisions and a department, the Southeast and Southwest Asian Affairs Department, established in August 2006 in part to address the increasing salience of India, Pakistan, and ASEAN-related issues. The Bureau is headed by Director-General Akitaka Saiki, who, according to Kohara, primarily handles China, the Korean Peninsula, and ASEAN 3 issues and under whom work three deputies. The Department is headed by Hiroshi Inomata, who manages India, Pakistan, and Mekong Region countries, in particular, and for whom work four deputies. Ishikane and Kohara double as deputies in the Bureau and in the Department.

¶12. (C) Many deputies are dual-hatted to maximize experience and expertise, Kitano explained. Kitano, himself, serves as Assistant Vice Minister for Crisis Management and Southeast and Southwest Asian Affairs Department DDG. Under the crisis management portfolio, Kitano is involved in matters related to a North Korean missile launch or nuclear test, or a hostage crisis-type scenario similar to the 1996 incident at the Japanese Embassy in Lima, Peru. As Department DDG, Kitano spends most of his time on Pakistan-related issues and on maritime Southeast Asia, particularly countries such as Indonesia, Philippines, and East Timor. Kohara, in his role as Bureau principal DDG and Department principal DDG, covers

April 1980 Joined MOFA.
July 1989 Deputy Director, Press Division.
January 1991 Deputy Director, Loan Aid Division.
May 1993 Consul, Consul-General of Japan, Hong Kong.
April 1996 Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Japan to
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February 1999 Director, Regional Policy Division.
January 2001 Director, Grant Aid Division.
April 2003 Professor, National Institute of
Information.
March 2005 Deputy Consul-General, Consulate-General of
Japan, Los Angeles.
Speaks English well. Speaks Mandarin.
ROOS